



# voiceprint

Newsletter

of the New South Wales Branch

of the Oral History Association

of Australia

# 25

October 2001



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The views expressed in articles in this *Voiceprint*  
are not necessarily those of the NSW Branch of the  
Oral History Association of Australia, nor its editors

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# Editorial

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*A very special welcome to the Editorial committee to Diana Covell and Sue Georgevits who both answered the plea for assistance. It is wonderful to have members offering to help. There is still room if others would also like to assist, and, of course the committee always welcomes your contributions!*

*In this edition you will find an opinion from Richard Raxworthy about some of the newer technology available. Have other members tried any new equipment? How well did it work for you? I am sure many members are interested to hear your opinions, do share them with members.*

*This edition brings you some reports to keep members in the picture relating to the world of oral history, and in particular 'hot off the press' a report of the recent Canberra Conference.*

*The theme of the Canberra conference was Voices of a 20th Century Nation and in this edition we are pleased to be able to present several articles that link in with this theme. Anthea Kingsley's interesting article outlines the methods she uses in developing personal histories for her clients, a history that is theirs alone but set in a context that will have meaning for future generations. Johanna Perheentupa tells us something of her personal feelings in relation to her research in Sydney with indigenous women. Anne Murphy has shared with us some reflections about education in the past for blind students. I have tried to put into words my feelings of one marvelous evening at the Olympics. More reminiscences please?*

*Oral History does allow the personal voices to speak. Please send in your contribution for our next edition which will be published early in 2002.*

**Joyce Cribb**

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## New Members

It is with our usual pleasure that we list our New Members and extend a warm welcome to them. We have included those who joined at the very recent National Conference (30 August to 2 September) held at the National Library of Australia, Canberra. Conferences are great for meeting people and we encountered our former member Kristy Muir, one of the presenters, whose address had changed so we sadly had listed her under 'address unknown'. We are delighted to make contact again and re-welcome her to the membership!

We hope there are others who intend to join the Association and will send us their membership application form included in their beautiful red conference bag.

### **Fairfield City Library Service**

#### **NSW Teachers Federation**

#### **Spastic Centre NSW**

**Elizabethan O'Sullivan**

Records manager

**Sue Pearce**

Teacher

**Amelia Klein**

Student

**Alison Fine**

Medical technician

**Matthew Griffiths**

Information officer

**Rob Willis**

Folklorist

**Edmund Graham**

Interested in local history

**Graham Hinton**

Museum Curator

**Dianne Dahlitz**

Oral History NLA

**Jill Jay**

Anthropology Student

**Gillian Macdougall**

Executive officer

**Karen Dempsey**

Social worker

**Caroline Evans**

Family history

**Heather Goodall**

Lecturer UTS

**Jola Walczynski**

Teacher/ writer

**D. McGowan**

Clerk

**Jill Hummell**

Occupational Therapist

<b>Dr. J. Powell</b>	Consultant
<b>Barbara Walker</b>	Interested in oral history
At the conference:	
<b>Laurel Wraight</b>	Visual Autobiographies
<b>Lyn Mathieson</b>	Folk Music history
<b>Georgina S. Chaseling</b>	Bookseller
<b>Valarie Kaur Brar</b>	Student
<b>Michael Richards</b>	Historian, Old Parliament House
<b>Keiko Tamura</b>	Historian
<b>The People's Forest Foundation</b>	
<b>R.W. Iverach</b>	Army Reserve Museum
<b>Joy McCann</b>	Interested in rural community history
<b>Alison Wicks</b>	Occupational therapist

## Life membership awards

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*Three Honorary Life Memberships were conferred on members of the OHAA at the Conference. Two of these are members of the NSW Branch, Tim and Ros Bowden. The citations for all three – Beth Robertson, is the South Australian nomination of course – follow. Congratulations to them all for their truly national contribution to oral history!*

### **Ros Bowden**

Ros attended the first Women in Labour Conference in International Women's Year in 1975. ABC Radio's recently introduced Coming Out Show was keen to present women's stories which, until that time, were very seldom heard on air. Radio was perfect for encouraging these presentations as women could talk about their own lives in their own way.

Ros was in the vanguard of those who began to value the original taped interviews and the interviewers began to copy the tapes before they were edited for making the programs. These were then safely stored. Previously the contents of these tapes were transcribed for print or edited for radio and the tape then recycled. As Ros remarks, at that time 'the physical tape was more valuable than the contents!'

For the Coming Out Show Ros began making documentaries using oral history material. These included the *Women's Land Army* and the history of *Australian Women Flyers* before World War II. *Work of Equal Value* was the title of her series of programs about the role of women in Australian history.

*Being Aboriginal* won the inaugural Human Rights Award for Radio Documentary in 1987. *Between Two Laws* examined the role of white patrol officers in the Northern Territory and their work with remote Aboriginal communities. Ros also, ever the pioneer, uncovered the extraordinary story of 'stolen' Aboriginal children who were evacuated from Croker Island after the bombing of Darwin and taken to live on the south coast of New South Wales.

From 1989 Ros, succeeding Tim Bowden and Jenny Palmer, was Executive Producer and head of the ABC's Social History Unit, a unique section of public radio. She was certainly responsible for keeping the unit relevant and fighting for its continued existence. It continues to survive actively as the Social History and Features Unit. She continued to make documentaries, sometimes series, including the life of Jessie Street, as well as a number of single programs. She retired from the ABC in 1994.

Ros was a foundation member of the Oral History Association of Australia and continues her membership to this day. In fact she and Tim had the only Household membership on record in NSW for many years! She attended many of the conferences, participated as a speaker and contributed to the Journal.

Her collection of 'saved tapes', generously donated by her, forms now part of the oral history collection in the State Library of New South Wales.

### **Tim Bowden**

From his schooldays Tim was determined to be a journalist and he achieved a cadetship on the *Hobart Mercury* in 1955 while doing a part time arts degree at the University of Tasmania. In 1959 a friend of his father's became Supervisor of Talks for the ABC and Tim was sent on his first assignment to record a wool auction in Hobart and to interview a wool buyer. The sounds of the excitement and the bidding together with the revealing 'slow drawl' of the wool buyer delighted him – and he was hooked! He left the Mercury and began to freelance for the ABC.

He then went for the traditional working holiday in England and worked for a time for the BBC. On his return to Hobart in 1963 he joined the staff of the ABC as Talks Officer and in 1965 became an ABC correspondent in South-East Asia based in Singapore. Current affairs then claimed him, but he decided to take long service leave and consider his options. While travelling with Ros and his small son he

recorded numbers of interviews. Oral history based documentaries became a real focus of his work.

ABC Radio supported his endeavours and he made a number of programs. When it came on air he was much inspired by the BBC program *Plain Tales from the Raj*. Consequently at the direction of the ABC and 300 hours of oral history recording in Australia and Papua New Guinea later, he made *Taim Bilong Masta – the Australian Involvement with Papua Guinea*.

Professor Hank Nelson assisted him and Daniel Connell with the historical background for the program. However, before that series had finished going to air in the early 1980s, Dr Nelson persuaded them to undertake the investigation of the lives of former prisoners of war in Asia. After 350 hours of interviews and another two and a half years of work the epoch-making series *Prisoners of War – Australians under Nippon* was presented in 1984.

In 1985 Tim persuaded the ABC that there should be a unit which specialised in the collection and broadcasting of oral history based material. As noted in the presentation of Ros' life this unit continued and survives, enlarged, as the Social History and Features Unit, with *Hindsight, Verbatim* and *Earshot* to its credit.

In 1987 Tim undertook to do a series of documentaries on Australians who went to Antarctica with the Australian Antarctic Division. He went himself to the Antarctic in 1989 and wrote of his experiences.

1993 saw his retirement from the ABC and he was commissioned then to write the jubilee history of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions, *The Silence Calling. Australian in Antarctica 1947-97*. The ABC produced a 6-part television series *Breaking the Ice*, hosted by Tim based on *Silence Calling*.

All Tim's published works are based on oral history including his well-received *The Way my Father Tells it – the Story of an Australian Life* and *One Crowded Hour – Neil Davis, Combat Cameraman 1934-1985*. Tim had spent many hours of recording with Neil Davis before he was killed in Bangkok in 1985.

In conclusion, to quote Tim himself, dedicated as he is to oral history, 'not everyone can write stylishly, instinctively and well. Yet almost everyone can tell a good story'.

In conferring Life Memberships on Ros and on Tim the OHAA is endorsing their outstanding contribution to oral history and to radio. We pledge to keep faith with the storytellers and to continue to listen and record.



### **Beth M. Robertson**

Beth Robertson, whose name is synonymous with oral history in South Australia, has recently stepped down from the executive committee after an incredible twenty years of service. Beth joined the OHAA committee in 1981, quickly taking on the role of secretary in 1982. The following year she became the South Australian representative on the National Executive of the OHAA, a role she continued to play until the beginning of 2001. In 1983, Beth became the President of the South Australian Branch. She remained President until 1997. For sixteen years, Beth was the Editor of *Word of Mouth* and was responsible for putting together all issues from number 1 right through to number 37. From 1995-1997 Beth was the Co-convenor of the very successful Tenth Biennial National Conference, 'Crossing Borders', held in Alice Springs in 1997.

Perhaps Beth's greatest gift to oral history is her *Oral History Handbook*, first published in 1983. The Association has recently released a fourth edition, updated by Beth to include information on digital technology. This practical, informative and readable book has become a classic. It is recognised nationally as the principal guide to the practice of oral history in Australia. It is used widely overseas.

Throughout her career in oral history – as Oral History Officer at the State Library of South Australia, (and more recently as Manager of the Audio Visual Project Team) and in her role as a member of the OHAA committee – Beth has contributed to education and training in oral history in SA and nationally. She has conducted workshops and skills seminars for many different groups including the State library of SA, WEA, Continuing Education at the University of Adelaide, country and city clubs and societies, as well as for the South Australian and National bodies of the OHAA.

Beth has a passion for oral history and a unique talent for sharing practical and helpful information about it. She is also an inspiring teacher. Despite her heavy work load over the years, she has always been approachable and I know that many oral history projects across this State owe their beginnings and their success to Beth, not to mention their final resting-place in the JD Somerville collection at the State Library of SA. Beth has also contributed a large number of oral history interviews herself to the collection.

Beth has contributed to the OHAA (SA) Inc Branch tirelessly and enthusiastically. It is with great pleasure that the OHAA nationally recognises this, applauds her endeavours and confers Life Membership upon her.

## Nuts and Bolts – Richard Raxworthy – Historian

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### ***In answer to article by Francis Good, Voiceprint, No 24 March 2001.***

*(We are pleased to have further comment from Richard Raxworthy in relation to the differing opinions surrounding the best method of recording and storing oral histories. Do you have any comment to make regarding your experiences with any of the technologies now available – old or new? Please make a contribution to the debate. Ed)*

#### **Digitising Ambient Sound.**

While agreeing with much of the March article, *Digitizing the Word*, by Francis Good, in which he finds that digital recording and storage is the ideal, I must disagree on a number of points. Firstly, digital recording and storage is not, as yet, archivally proven. Secondly, digital methods and materials are much more expensive and are therefore beyond the means of many projects; and thirdly, digital recording is much too sensitive in practice in most ambient sound situations.

While most public projects now require digital audio tape (DAT) recording, it has been noted that this has resulted in the relocation or abandonment of a number of interviews, because of the level or type of ambient sound. The DAT recorder often picks up electronic signals from radios, fax machines, door alarms and the like. In addition, DAT can pick up such sounds as breathing, or a dog licking, two or more meters away. The noise of a fridge, an air conditioner or a fan in the next room, can render the location unsuitable.

Outside traffic and aircraft noise can be impossible; even pleasant garden birdsong can sound intrusive.

With a standard analogue cassette recorder and a suitable dull microphone, many of these ambient sound problems are inaudible, or at least unobtrusive. In many cases, recording on an analogue cassette recorder with a comparatively insensitive microphone and transferring it to DAT later, can be the best solution. Personally, I prefer to use a Sony EV5000 mono three-head cassette recorder, manually operated, with standard Sony hand or stand held, or lapel microphones and a pair of Sennheiser monitoring headphones. For failsafe purposes I also like to use another small manual recorder in tandem. A Sony DAT recorder can be used direct if the sound is near perfect, which is very rare; otherwise the analogue cassette can be transferred to DAT later, with very little loss on spoken word in practice. In most cases the result can be much better than DAT recording in ambient sound. It is possible to record with both DAT and analogue recorders in tandem, but at present sensitive

microphones must be used for DAT. I do not see why a suitably insensitive microphone could not be developed for DAT, as it has been for analogue. The tiny

microphones used in the Walkman recorders are also too sensitive, the Tandy lapel microphones being better suited for spoken word in both audio and video.

## REPORTS

### **Voices of a 20th Century Nation** – Report of The Oral History Association of Australia – Biennial Conference 2001 – Joyce Cribb

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Oral Historians, some 150, as listed, gathered from around the nation as well as several from overseas, in Canberra between 30th August and 2nd September. The program for this conference, had exhorted those attending to listen and to speak! There was of course much more – hearing tales from the past, discussion of so many issues, seeing as well as listening, feeling – such a mixture of emotions, meeting friends, making new and catching up with friends from other places – putting names to faces, crowded days and nights were filled with interest.

The Conference committee led by Susan Marsden warmly welcomed all to Canberra. It was fresh and cold outside, a little mist at times, but warm indoors, and the city was clothed in a beautiful bounty of spring blossom which seemed to promise fairer days ahead. If the trees of Canberra were laden down with a beautiful bounty, so was the conference. There were so many excellent

presentations, tours and functions that delegates were continually faced with the difficult task of choosing between concurrent presentations and events.

There were a number of themes presented at the conference, a different one on each of the four days that allowed the voices from the past century to inform on; 'Making and Remaking Nationhood', 'Reconciliation', 'Twentieth Century Nation' and 'Voices'. Each of these themes had sub-themes allowing for some 50 presentations over the four days of the conference. Many of the papers are published in the OHAA Journal 2001, No 23, so members who missed out on the conference will be able read for themselves these excellent papers. However, for those who were not able to attend, the words spoken gained added meaning with personal presentation, the questions, the discussion and the visual images used to support the spoken word. There were some superb visuals, slides and video,

enjoyed by the delegates, as well as an excellent evening with ScreenSound Australia, one of the participating organisations.

The National Library proved to be an excellent venue, and delegates had opportunity to visit other venues unique to the National Capital, The National Archives, the Australian War Memorial, Old Parliament House as well as ScreenSound Australia. There was also for those who attended the Conference dinner a brief tour of the latest Canberra icon, the National Museum of Australia.

The stories told at the conference represented such varied and diverse aspects of the people and events from the 20th Century we were all at some point touched and humbled by the courage and determination reflected by these voices from the past. The stories of those who came from other lands to labour and work in Australia, the stories

of those who have been alienated from their land and people, the stories of those who opened doors to education and professions that had been closed. At the final session with music and song the delightful current voices of the Cyrenes; presented excerpts from their production *On the Souls of Her Feet*. The Cyrenes are a community choir formed by a group of Canberra women, who love to sing. The production they featured, is based on the turning point in the lives of eleven Canberra women, and provided a very fitting finale for a successful and interesting conference. Thank you to the organising committee for their welcome and all the hard work which made conference days so enjoyable and rewarding for all the delegates.

## A Brief Report from the BGM – Rosemary Block (President)

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The Biennial General Meeting of the Oral History Association of Australia was held at 4.30pm on Saturday 1 September, 2001, and was gratifyingly well-attended. A record!

What was even better was that there was apparently unanimous support for our long-overdue increase in membership fees. AND a motion was put from the floor that the fees should be reviewed every 2 years at the BGM. This would certainly not necessarily result in any increase, but just keep us up to date.

The new fees for **1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003** will be: Individual \$35, Concessional \$25, Household \$45, Institutional \$55. As you will note they are very modest, but we hope they will allow the branches to be more effective financially.

In the general enthusiasm very much abroad at the Conference, a suggestion was powerfully endorsed that the OHAA examine ways in which to expand the membership. It was generally felt that while the membership is steady, the Association should make a real effort to expand. The National Committee will work on strategies and co-opt to a sub-committee anyone interested in participating in this useful project.

During the Conference a very productive session was held on university ethics committees and the BGM proposed a working party to take this matter further and address issues relevant to oral history. Ethics committees, because of their nature and their establishment – historically often based on medical issues – are quite often impeding to social historians. The meeting demonstrated very heartening support for continuing to address the issues.

There is a proposal that Australia and New Zealand jointly host the 2006 conference of the International Oral History Association. It would be the first time that the conference would take place in 'Oceania'. There was definite interest in support of this at the meeting. The National Committee undertook to investigate the possibility of this endeavour and report by June 2002.

It was the most positive and supporting BGM I have ever attended – thank you to you all.

## A Welcome and a Gift – Rosemary Block (President)

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At the Welcome Reception for Conference delegates and friends, graciously hosted, as in so much else, by the National Library of Australia, there was a very interesting presentation.

Peter Rubinstein of Radiowise, received a grant from the Centenary of Federation to interview 100 persons of 100 years and over. His project '100 Centenarians: Children of Federation' had been completed and was ready to be donated to the National Library of Australia. Acting Director-General Dr Warwick Cathro, introduced the Minister for the Arts, the Honourable Peter McGauran who received the donation on behalf of the Library. Members of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation also attended. It was a great occasion. (Please see STOP PRESS).

I was glad to accept an invitation to lend my welcome to all present and I thought I would share with you a little anecdote I quoted.

Adam Gopnik, a regular contributor to the New Yorker magazine recently spent 5 years in Paris with his small family. During that time he wrote a number of pieces, styling himself a 'comic-sentimental essayist'. These have been published now in a collection and the following seemed to be particularly germane to oral historians. In defence of

his title he avers that he looks for the 'large in the small, the macro in the micro, the figure in the carpet, and if some big truths passed by, I hope some significant small ones got caught.

'Even if experience shows no more than itself, it is still worth showing. Experience and history, I think, are actually like the two trains in the Keaton movie where Buster struggles to keep up with the big engine by pumping furiously on a handcar on the adjoining track. It looks as if the little handcar of experience and the big train of history are headed for the same place at the same speed; but in fact the big train is going where it is headed, and those of us in the handcar keep up only by working very hard, for a little while.'

However, I think you will agree with me, we all remember Buster's face and the flying train is just the background.

The Welcome Reception was a very warm ending to a stimulating first Conference day. Our grateful thanks go to the National Library of Australia for its generous hospitality.

## Public History Interest Network – Margaret Park

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Our last meeting was held at the National Trust headquarters, Observatory Hill courtesy of Julie Petersen and Michael Lech. One of the highlights of PHIN is the opportunity to see inside the workings of historical, cultural and heritage organizations and learn about their philosophies, programs and facilities. Julie talked about the forthcoming National Trust Centenary of Federation Lecture Series distributed flyers publicizing this interesting array of public lectures. Contact Julie at the National Trust if you would like to know more about the Trust. We also discussed the varied activities our members are currently involved in. PHIN has grown to a member list of 55. If you have any item

of interest to PHINers and have access to email please forward them to Margaret Park (email address below) and the information will be forwarded on to all PHINers with email access.

Just a reminder that PHIN is a **'special interest public history network'** of the Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA) and as such membership of the OHAA is a prerequisite for PHINers. As a special interest group under the OHAA umbrella PHIN does not need to incorporate.

Email<parmar@northsydney.nsw.gov.au>

## The Paddington Project – Diana Covell

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Andrew Starr<sup>1</sup> and Janet Morice<sup>2</sup> conducted 100 interviews with local residents and shopkeepers in a three year project to produce a social history of their Sydney suburb, called *Paddington Stories*<sup>3</sup>.

Their self-published book spans the years 1788 to 2000 and is dedicated to Max Kelly<sup>4</sup> (1935-1996) who inspired the project with his plans for a companion book to *Paddock Full of Houses* which described the economic history of Paddington to the 1890s.

Jan and Andrew discussed the “Paddington Project” at a seminar held in the State Library of NSW on May 5, organized by the OHAA (NSW). Their exemplary presentation provided useful insights into developing such a project from start to finish as well as clues to conducting a successful working partnership.

### **Initial research and the struggle for funds**

First stop for the researchers was the Paddo library where bibliographies in the back of books in the local history section provided useful leads to other resources such as regional municipal council publications and archival material in the Dixon room at the Mitchell Library.

Jan said she became so excited about Darcy Wentworth, the notorious father of William Wentworth, that it took a timely question from a Sydney City Council historian to establish whether she was writing about Darcy and the settlement of Sydney or about Paddington. One of the helpful pieces of advice that she and Andrew brought from the project was to always finish research before trying to present the complete story. Another was to beware the danger of trying to follow up one particular fact as it can be very time consuming. Instead, write something like: “It has been said that...” or “It could have been...”

Their attempts to gain funds for the project became a long and frustrating exercise, especially when their potential publisher, Hale & Ironmonger, closed down. They were advised of the only funding that eventuated for the project four months after publication. When it came to finding the 100 interviewees for the project, networking proved useful, but Jan also approached people in the streets and local shops. With so many interviews to conduct, it was not possible to do more than six per week.

Writing a brief summary of each interview was a good idea, Jan pointed out, so that when it came to selecting



interviews, major points of interest could be viewed at a glance. She also stressed that it is important to always show respect for the interviewees and never to interview for longer than one hour.

Transcribing the 100 interviews took 800 hours of typing – it was almost a million words! To save costs, Jan did the typing herself.

A photograph was taken of every person interviewed for the project. Precious old photos offered by interviewees were first lasered and then blown up. To reach printing quality however, selected photos had to be burned into a CD ROM at a cost of \$35 each. Most expensive of all were photos of drawings of indigenous elder Coalby and his wife Daringa which had to be obtained from the British Museum of Natural History.

### **The writing process**

Once all the research and interviews for the book had been completed, the actual writing took a surprisingly short time. With the précis used for funding applications whittled down to a punchy prologue, Jan and Andrew were off to a good start and wrote 90 per cent of the text in just four and a half months.

Early in the process, they had formal meetings together once a month to sort

out what each of them would write. They agreed to work to a deadline with a short holiday treat as reward. They also agreed to edit each other's work and that there would be no arguments about the editing!

A significant challenge was deciding on the right structure for the book. In the end they chose to write chapters dealing with particular aspects of life in Paddington which run as a narrative situated in a broader Australian historical context. With titles such as "Cast Iron Morality", "We Done It Hard", "Towards a Bohemian Utopia" and "Money Changes Everything", each chapter is enlivened with recollections and comments by many local inhabitants, correlated where possible with newspaper articles and other material.

### **Marketing and distribution**

After shopping around for a suitable printer and settling on an economical print run of 2000 copies with the helpful staff at Southwood Press, the next task for Andrew and Jan was to market their new book. The key to their marketing strategy was to invite as many people as possible to hear talks about the Paddington project at a couple of book launches. They catered for the launches themselves and Andrew hand-delivered invitations to all the interviewees and every local real estate agency, architect, designer, gallery and shop.

Postcards with mail order forms on the back were printed and sent out to a list of specific people in historical societies, local councils, universities and other institutions. Some businesses offered to enclose the publicity cards in their mailouts to customers. Cheap posters were put up in local shops and display copies of the book were placed in local doctors' surgeries.

About 60 copies of the book were sent to radio stations, newspapers and other media, resulting in reviews in *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Telegraph*. Radio National's "Hindsight" program helped to promote sales interstate.

When it came to selling through bookshops, they found that Dymocks and Collins are the only free franchises that will buy from people "off the street". They also found that booksellers take a minimum of 45 % sale or return, usually accept very few copies and often take ages to pay. However the book sold well in local bookstores and also through different local shops, even dress shops and delicatessens.

*Paddington Stories* is a fascinating book about that place and it's people but it has a wider appeal. Of 2000 copies, only a couple of hundred remain. If you weren't amongst those who queued for a copy at the seminar, try to lay hold of one soon.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Starr is an art historian, currently working as an historian and heritage consultant. His MA thesis, *Renovation, Restoration and Heritage Values in Prospect Street Paddington*, was completed at Sydney University.

<sup>2</sup> Janet Morice is a teacher and writer. Her book, *Six-bob-a-Day Tourist*, Penguin, Australia 1985, traced the effects of WW1 on a Melbourne family. In 1992 she edited an anthology of children's writing, *Words around the World*.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Starr and Janet Morice, *Paddington Stories*, Sydney, 2000

<sup>4</sup> Max Kelly, *Paddock Full of Houses*, Sydney, 1978

# A Cultural Life: North Sydney's Heritage and Future

– A Centenary of Federation 2001 Community Project – Margaret Park

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In 1998 North Sydney Council commissioned a Heritage and Cultural Resources Study. The Study was undertaken by consultants, Australia Street, in association with Spackman & Mossop and Paul Davies Architects.

A 'framework' document identified eight 'quality of life' themes, uniquely characterizing North Sydney, against which building and design developments could be tested. When the Heritage and Cultural Resources Study was launched in Local Government Week (August 1998) an exhibition was held in Stanton Library called "A Cultural Life" consisting of artworks (from the North Sydney Art Prize) and photographs (archival and contemporary) illustrating the eight 'quality of life' themes. The exhibition was very well received by the community and it led to the decision to develop the Heritage and Cultural Resources Study themes into a 'popularized' version especially for the Centenary of Federation. A book, a community photographic exhibition, an audio visual CD-ROM, a set of photographic images on CD-Rom for the Stanton Library Centenary of Federation archive and a web page were planned.

A grant of \$35,000 was received from the Commonwealth Government under

the Federation Fund Grants Scheme 1999 to produce this exciting and ambitious project.

The project and "A Cultural Life" Publication\* was launched on Sunday 22 July by the Hon Joe Hockey, Minister for Financial Services and Administration, who is the local Member of Parliament for North Sydney, and attended by the Mayor of North Sydney, Councillor Genia McCaffery.

"A Cultural Life" Community Photographic Exhibition was the first part of the project to be produced (in association with Council's Arts and Recreation Manager) by members of the local arts group, Primrose Park Photographers, part of the Primrose Park Art & Craft Centre, Cremorne. It has been displayed during 2001 at the Centre and also at Don Bank Museum.

It reflects the following eight North Sydney themes:

- (1) A Well-respected Topography
- (2) Views Great and Small
- (3) On the Waterfront
- (4) An Envious Urbanism
- (5) Landmarks
- (6) Layers of History
- (7) A Vibrant Economy
- (8) Civic Tradition

This has been a very successful collaboration between Council and the community and provides a fitting tribute to Australia's Centenary of Federation, Local Government Week and the International Year of Volunteers 2001.

*\* The publication is available for sale at North Sydney Council. Contact Margaret Park, Council Historian, North Sydney Council – Ph.(02)9936 8411*



## ARTICLES

# Personal History: Narrative and the Potential to Heal – Anthea Kingsley

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*(Thank you to Anthea Kingsley, PhD, Personal Historian, for permission to copy her article from Playback Vol.21 No.2; Newsletter of the West Australian Oral History Association. Anthea provided the following brief biography for Voiceprint.*

*'Anthea set up Heirloom Biography to record, in oral and written formats, the life stories, memoirs, biographical details and anecdotes of older people. In addition to her business Anthea also works as an aged-care health professional where she uses reminiscence and life storytelling as a means of assisting older people to find meaning and to maintain a connection with their sense of self:')*

I describe myself as a Personal Historian. I am proprietor of the small personal history business Heirloom Biography which is dedicated to recording the personal histories of elderly people. In my work I use oral history as a primary data collection technique. My emphasis, however, is always on the personal rather than the historical.

Personal history, a term used extensively in North America but virtually unknown in Australia, involves the setting down of the details of one's life, as a record for future generations. In North America personal historians use a variety of means to accomplish this objective – video recordings, photo-journaling, documentary style film-making, scrap-booking, artwork, sculpture, verse, theatre, dance and both oral and written narrative. Choice of

media is limited only by the personal historian's skills and imagination. Many personal historians also conduct workshops and courses on developing the skills to assist people to record their own personal history.

In my case, I focus on written narrative biographic type projects. I use a mixture of recorded narrative, personal objects, documents, records, diaries, letters, photographs and public archival material. Unlike conventional biographies, I do not attempt to interpret the narrator's life. Instead, I aim to capture the essence of the narrator's life in the unfolding and flow of stories. Thus my objective is to prepare the lifestory from the narrator's point of view, maintaining their language and idiosyncratic expressions. In this way I try to preserve the narrator's unique voice,

which I believe gives the finished projects a quality of timelessness.

With my data coming from such diverse sources, however, it is impossible to produce a record that is completely verbatim. Working from the recorded interviews/conversations the transcriptions are then edited with readability as the major consideration. (Editing predominantly focuses on removing the false starts, the self corrections, and repetitions; background material, which often prefaces people's stories is also integrated into the text to help the narrative to flow more smoothly.)

At this point I begin integrating additional information from my alternative sources, which I believe gives the completed personal history added texture and depth. Listening to the stories of others – particularly those of elderly people has been a personal and professional interest of mine for many years. With a background in health education, aged care, and grief counseling I have a natural interest in healing and stories. The professions of psychology and psychiatry are, of course, well versed in the healing power of narrative, and psychotherapy is founded on the premise of narrative as therapy. My own research into the sources of meaning for elderly nursing home residents confirms that a major source of meaning comes from being able to

tell your story – fully and truthfully – and to have that story heard. When one is able to present the details – events, feelings, beliefs, relationships, aspirations, disappointments, conflicts and tragedies – in their totality, important personal revelations frequently float to the surface.

Telling one's story is similar to the process of weaving a hand made rug. When the warp is tightened firmly against the frame and the weft of cross-threads are strong and even, the intricacies of the design – both flawed and beautiful – are more easily discernible. Like a traditional rug of hand-dyed and woven wool, variation in colour occurs – and such variation is a natural part of the beauty inherent in all hand-made works. Thus, it is in this authentic depiction of one's hand-made life that meaning – and the possibility for recreating or renewing meaning – can be found.

Having the opportunity to look back over life with courage and honesty enables a range of patterns, themes, and even disparate events to come into focus. Within this process lies the potential healing power of personal history. Narrator's insights, in my experience of working with people as they discern the "bigger picture" of their lives, are always unpredictable and frequently surprising. Some insights are healing in themselves, whilst others provide opportunities for

healing. It is always up to the clients to decide how they wish to deal with their insights some accept the challenge, others choose to do nothing, and others deny their insights altogether.

My role is more akin to a witness – someone simply to acknowledge clients’ experiences. As a personal historian I am always prepared for the unexpected. (Naturally this process also demands a high degree of sensitivity from the personal historian.) In having spent almost twenty years working with elderly people I have learnt that the majority of older people are very courageous in acknowledging both the beauties and difficulties within their lives; and for accepting the challenge that telling their stories entails.

Insights quite often occur during the process of interviewing, although I often find that they are more likely to occur at the completion of the project. A completed tapestry is more likely to reveal the breaks in the patterns, the flawed wool, or the uneven tension. For someone who has lived a long life it can be very reassuring to realize that there has been a consistent but subtle theme weaving its way through life. In the uncertainty of old age many people wonder what their lives have amounted to. Questions such as “Who am I?” “What have I contributed?” “Have I mattered?” are frequently asked.

Since we live in a society that tends to shy away from the big questions of life most elderly people have never had the opportunity to explore, let alone discuss, these concerns. For me, this is one of the most attractive aspects of working as a personal historian. Feeling valued – believing that life has mattered – is central to being human and has its own set of meanings. In the hurly-burly of everyday life when life is dictated by prescribed roles feeling as though you matter is more easily discerned than in old age. In retirement, and especially in very old age, feeling a sense of intrinsic value is less easily discernible.

Consequently, being able to examine one’s life in its entirety provides a timely reminder that this life has been and continues to be valuable. Valuing is inherent in personal history’s aim of recording the details of a person’s life as a record for future generations. The sense of wholeness that comes from recording one’s story authentically, rather than romanticized or sanitized, provides the possibility of an equally authentic connection with future generations.

Most of my clients view this as the primary reason for recording their stories. In this way personal history allows older people an opportunity, perhaps a final opportunity, to make a uniquely personal contribution to the continuity of human experience.

# The Splash with no Colours? Thoughts on Whiteness – Johanna Perheentupa

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*This paper is based on a talk which Johanna gave in the Post Graduate Seminar at the School of History, University of New South Wales on 24 October 2000*

In this article I would like to discuss issues of colour and in particular I would like to talk about the colour white. Or perhaps I should say 'whiteness', signifying a race and thus forming subjective experiences. Before getting to the actual story though I should tell a little bit about my background. I am a PhD student from Finland. For some five years now I have studied Australian history and, in particular, the history of Indigenous people in Australia. As a non-Indigenous and non-Australian researcher – white and Finnish – I have acquired knowledge about the cultures and practices as well as history of Australia. In my PhD I am looking at the history of Indigenous activism in Sydney.

To start with I would like to tell a little story, which, to me reflects some of my experiences of working in Australia. Once when I was visiting my aunt who lived and worked for many years in India, we were looking at her pictures from her trips to the rural villages in Gujarat. In one of the pictures she was sitting on the step of a small hut with three Indian women. My aunt was dressed in beige – trousers and shirt – and sitting beside

her were these women wearing beautiful colourful saris and gold and silver jewelry. My aunt pointed to the picture and said to me: "That's me: the colourless splash in the middle."

This story came to my mind one day when I visited some women that I was in the process of interviewing at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Sydney. These women have been heavily involved with or witnessed many of the major events in Indigenous activism during the past 30 years. I had a couple of tapes to give back to them, and while I was searching through my bag, on another level of consciousness floating somewhere above, I suddenly felt drained of all my colours in front of these strong women. And I remembered the picture my aunt showed me of herself: the colourless splash surrounded by people from a different culture in their own country.

Now, why on earth did I feel like that, I asked myself. My aunt as a textile designer was probably just referring to the aesthetic aspects of her colours in relation to the Gujarati women. So what in this moment reminded me of my



aunt's picture? It would not be reasonable to argue that the women with whom I was standing saw me as a splash with no colours. They had come to know me or at least my face during the past few weeks. They knew where I came from and what I was doing. Surely, to them, my presence was coloured with different meanings. If nothing else they would have seen me as a white person.

As I have come to learn, white is also a colour. It is a colour of a race in the same way as white people are used to thinking about black signifying race. More importantly white or 'whiteness' reflects the dominant position of European cultures in the world and the privileges that white people have gained and continue to gain because of this. Naturally race is not a biological factor but culturally constructed. Nevertheless, race matters because it determines the way we are treated and our opportunities in life.

Wendy Brady points out in her article "Talkin up Whiteness": A Black and White Dialogue" that the white 'others' no longer can "observe by standing back in conscious distance, but must engage in forming questions about this aspect of identity of theirs that is called whiteness." She further remarks that "in essence there is a difference between being identified externally as white, and knowing oneself – internally, as it were –

as white." Brady's point is that before whiteness has been seen as neutral – as a norm in relation to which everything else has been different. However, when discussing race also whiteness needs to be 'raced'.

I have been confronted about my colour, not aggressively, but rather to state that I belong to a certain race. This in itself has made me rethink the ideas I have about my colour. Finland, where I come from, is perceived of as very homogeneous country. My heritage is Finnish and all my Finnish friends are of Finnish heritage. When I grew up I did not come across 'race' in my own everyday experiences. 'Race' was merely present in my upbringing which emphasized universal humanist ideas like equal rights for all people, and saw 'race' as a concept that should not exist. Thus, to me 'race' was something distant, something that happened elsewhere.

So I find myself being reluctant to relate to the idea of whiteness. Though in the context of my research it has been necessary for me to try to learn to think myself as white, I still mainly identify with my national identity. Thus I perceive myself as different from Indigenous as well as Australian people. Should I now learn to think within these racial patterns and thus even change the values that I have come to appreciate as good? Naturally in my study I need to examine racism and the relations

between different races. But should I personally learn to see Aboriginal people as 'black' through their colour? Should I learn to paint myself 'white'? Or is there something that I have not realized before? After all, how homogeneous was Finland when I grew up? There were different ethnicities, such as Roma, commonly known as Gypsies, and the Indigenous people, the Sami people. And what about Finland in a global context, belonging to Europe and the Western world? What about films and media? How did these influence my ideas of race? Surely, people from different ethnicities, particularly people of colour, encountered racist treatment in Finland. So did race really happen elsewhere?

When listening to people's stories in the process of my work I had tried to minimize my personal influence in order to avoid affecting the interviewee's memory. I had not given much thought to my own subjectivity in this context. Thus, I had not considered my whiteness, but merely saw myself as an outsider. In a way I saw myself as neutral, disguised colourless in a role of a 'researcher'. However, I soon realized that whiteness influenced the way the interviewees responded to me, and what they wanted to tell. It mattered in the same way as my Finnishness did. For everyone my whiteness (as well as Finnishness) makes me an outsider.

However people's reactions to my whiteness differed. Some were not willing to talk to me because of my whiteness. They were resistant towards white researchers who had abused and taken advantage of Indigenous histories and cultures so many times before. For others it was more important that I came from Finland and thus I was different from the colonizers, despite my whiteness. It was important to educate me so that I could then, in my part, tell people in Finland how Indigenous people had been treated in Australia. There were also people who emphasized their belief in humanity in general. They did not want to judge others according to their colour like they had been judged. For most of the people whom I interviewed it was important, however, to tell me the whole story of the colonization of Australia from an Aboriginal perspective so that I would understand the context in which they operated as activists. Though whiteness as a factor worked differently in the interview process it was always present on some level.

I also came to recognize that whiteness influenced the way I, as a researcher, saw the interviewees and listened to their stories. Whiteness is part of my background and has shaped my understanding and identity. For instance, it has granted me the privilege

of seeing the world as a place where race does not matter.

Amina Mama remarks in her book<sup>1</sup>, how feminists have argued unanimously for the importance and validity of subjective experience to be taken seriously in social analysis and theory. Thus they have challenged the dualistic notion of objective to subjective and the notion of unitary, universal subject or identity. Feminist theories argue that paying greater attention to subjective factors in research process is actually a way of ensuring greater objectivity

However, if the interviewer is attempting to be neutral in order to minimize her/his influence in the interview process she/he cannot enter a dialogue with the interviewee in a way that would take into account the subjective factors of both interviewee and interviewer, researched and researcher. On the other hand the inability to understand whiteness as 'raced' prevents white researchers from seeing it as being part of their subjectivity and thus influencing the process of interview as well as their research.

While being aware of blackness white researchers also need to come to terms with their whiteness. It should be taken into account from the early stages of the research process. White researchers should consider what are their motives when pursuing a study among non-

white people. When preparing for interviews, interviewing and analyzing the interviews, whiteness should be considered as one of the factors influencing the process for it forms a part of white researchers' subjectivity. There are no colourless splashes in research processes.

#### **Note**

<sup>1</sup> Mama Amina, *Beyond the masks. Race, gender and subjectivity*, London & New York, Routledge, 1995, p13-14

*(Johanna has now returned to Finland. We thank her for her contribution and wish her well with her studies. We can contact her on your behalf if anyone would like to discuss her paper further with her. Ed)*

## Olympic Memories – Joyce Cribb

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*In the last Voiceprint I asked members if we could produce some “I was there...” stories in relation to the events of the Olympic Games or Paralympics. So far I still await contributions, however I will begin [and I do hope it is not the end as well] with some reminiscences of my own.*

### **“The night that Cathy Freeman won Olympic Gold – I was there!”**

*In OHAA Journal No 17, 1995 I wrote of the importance of reminiscence to an individual as they construct their individual identity and find meaning in the significant events that they experience through life. The individual story adds colour and interest to the official history, but it also gives expression to individual ways of seeing great events and records the hopes and feelings of the individual in relation to that event. These reminiscences reflect my feeling and memories of Cathy's gold.*

The Olympics had been a long time coming – starting with the tremendous excitement and hope that was expressed by so many of the young who were there at the Sydney Opera House “The night we won the Olympics!” My own student son was there and so were many of the students I was teaching at the time – so full of hope and joy and good things promised! The years that followed brought much debate, doubts and scandal clouded the dream and the excitement had evaporated. My son had asked what I wanted to go and see and

said “We’ll come with you” – [how family relationships evolve, the boy grown to manhood now looks after Mother!]. I had spent many an anxious afternoon watching children run relays, as well as a lot of time spent at training sessions – teaching the art of changing the baton at full speed. My first choice was to see the relay finals – but the price! So the 400 metre finals became the first choice. The tickets came – only B’s – so much fuss over tickets I wondered if it would be worth the effort, but at least we had tickets, when so many missed out.

The flame arrived and traveled around the nation and slowly the good feelings about the games built up. The flame was carried from St Ives to Pymble by a young Olympic athlete that I had known as a little girl taking part in the local Little Athletic Competition. I had kept the record books for the Little A’s and here was one of those taking part in Little A’s grown to Olympic Athletic. It was a proud moment for me, knowing that in all those Saturday mornings in the ‘record tent’ and the hours of keeping the record books, an Olympic Athlete had passed through!

The games began and the excitement and the anticipation built up. I was now looking forward to my evening out at the athletic stadium – it seemed that the whole of Australia expected Cathy Freeman to win gold, and my hopes were high too. I was so glad I had chosen to attend the Athletic Stadium on the evening of 25th September, 2000.

The afternoon was dull and cool with rain threatening – it seemed like many afternoons in earlier years when I [the mother] had nervously watched the finals at Little A's and school sports. They were good days with many good memories. This I hoped was going to be another good day!

We finally arrived at the stadium. The seats were great, a long climb up the steps over which the flame had been raised some ten days earlier and there was a clear view of the whole of the field – the flame burning above. They may have been B class seats but the view was A class. As the crowd built up so did the excitement and the anticipation and then, the little girls in the row in front asked "Is that Cathy down there?" Time now to get the field glasses adjusted to the other end of the field as the runners were introduced. Polite applause for those in lanes one to five but what a deafening roar and wave of flags for the young woman standing in lane six! Those in lanes seven and eight lost to the excitement. *'So many Australian flags*

*– did any other runner have any supporters at all?'* Such a babble of conversation from those around – "She has got her special suit on!" – "Come on Cathy!" – "She's really going for it!" – "She will do it easily!"

And then the runners were coming up to their blocks, getting down and all those in the stadium were on their feet. Everyone was going to run with her and you need to be on your feet to run! I was lucky that the little girl in front was still shorter than me even when standing on her seat so I could still see the whole of the track. There was silence, complete silence as everyone waited for the explosion of the gun. The runners were away and a great babble of excitement was released with the first strides. I have watched many 400 races, with a nervous 'mother butterflies' and there were plenty of butterflies this evening [Australian butterflies] as I was watched – my own commentary and instructions racing through my head.

*'Got to run your own race and keep your lead out in lane six – watch for the changing spacing between the runners as they came round the first bend and down the back straight – Cathy was holding her own – but not really gaining – coming into the top bend – not quite with the leaders – a straight line as they came across the middle of the top bend below*

*us – she is going to straighten up behind the leaders – going to have to go hard down the straight!*

“Go Cathy!” The instruction came with a simultaneous voice from the crowd – “Go Cathy! Go Cathy!” in unison, from it seemed every person at the stadium, and emphasized with countless stamping feet! The runner responded to the instruction. *‘Could see the push from the back foot as she straightened for the run down the straight. Good, she is going – now she is moving faster than the other runners – really going now – gaining on them – moving up past the other runners – she is going to win – hope for the first moment and then certainty, reassured by a glance up at the big screen – and there it is – the green and gold suited runner in the lead – now keep going right through the line! Go Cathy! The race was won and victory was ours – a victory it seemed to everyone in the crowd. All hands and flags in the air! Clap and clap, stamp the feet as well – jump up and down – on your seat if you were the little girl in front – and the stadium was shaking! Vibrating and moving under all those stamping feet! What a noise!’* – “Blitzed them! Just absolutely blitzed them down the straight!” was the comment of my son above the noise of the applause which kept on going, on and on – for all those who ran with Cathy the victory was theirs too! What a feeling of triumph and joy for all those who were there.

After the race Cathy sat down on the track and the strain of the past minute was obvious on her face as it filled the big screen. *‘I thought for a moment she might collapse, and a pang of conscience hit me – we had put such pressure on this young woman – surely we must not do it again – just for one race!’ The moment, however was there to enjoy, and enjoyed it certainly was! The lap of honour – two flags – no one will dare to complain this time – it seemed right that the red, yellow and black was entwined on her shoulders with red, white and blue – this was a victory for all Australia!’*

We certainly enjoyed the victory, as it seemed, all those who were there did. The story is there to tell all those who, in the years ahead, will listen. I have my story and the little girl in front of me will, all being well, tell hers for the next eighty odd years! There were many more victories to other great athletes, that are a part of the stories and great moments associated with the Olympics – there were more on this night, but for me, the best memories will be related to *‘The night that Cathy Freeman won Olympic gold, I was there!’*

## Making Dreams Come True – Anne Murphy

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*“I always wanted to be a tapdancer ...”*

Education is a life-long process but sometimes we lose sight of that in our rush to live in the present. In our society today there is a growing emphasis on the use of technology, and particularly so in the area of education. Having been involved in the education of students who are blind or vision impaired for seventeen years I became interested in finding out more about how similar students fared in the years before the invention of high-tech equipment.

I interviewed 18 people whose birthdates spanned the years 1916 to 1973 and asked them about their education.

In the 1940’s and 1950’s it was usual for blind babies to be sent to ‘educational institutions’ between the ages of 2 and 4 years of age. Some children only saw their parents when they returned home for holidays.

Daily life in such institutions was very regulated; *“every Tuesday morning they would give us a dose of Epsom salts”; “the meals were the same each day – on Wednesdays it was sausages, peas, potato and gravy – the other days it was slimy, slippery stews and overcooked vegetables”; “we were not allowed to play the piano on Sunday and we ate in silence”.*

But, like all children, there was delight to be found in desserts; *“sago was always lovely and twice a year we had apricot tart. The first time we ever had it they were celebrating the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, so from then on it was always called Harbour Bridge pudding!”* and games, *“we used to make up games, serial games, and I was always going on trips to England. We also played games like ‘French and English’.*

Students wrote braille by writing on a hand frame. Words were written from right to left and for every letter of each word to be written up to six holes had to be pierced with the stylus. When the sentence was complete the paper had to be removed from the braille frame, turned over, and the work was then read from left to right.

Later the Stainsby-Wayne braille writer was invented *“or as we lovingly called them – the chaff cutters”* and this was used in schools until the arrival of Perkins braille in the 1960’s where it was *greeted enthusiastically; “nothing has ever thrilled me as much as the day I put paper in a Perkins braille, wrote, and there were the words right under your hands”.*

All students, even those who could read large print, were required to learn braille.. *“a wooden frame was put over the top of the book and at the edge of the*

*frame a bib was tacked on. You had to put the top of the bib over your head so you couldn't read the braille by sight".*

Learning maths was also complicated. The students used a Taylor slate which comprised "a shallowish zinc tray. On top of this was another zinc board with octagonal holes – 432 of them. [There were] lead type, half an inch long with a bar at one end which protruded slightly and with two points protruding at the other end. [Placing these in the holes in different ways] you could get 16 signs, 0 to 9, plus, minus, divide, multiply, decimals, equals'. Sums were made down the board and students were able to follow the progression of the sum moving their hands over the lead type, "our fingers would be black, absolutely black".

Attempts were also made to provide some training for employment by teaching handcrafts; "rugmaking, making leather belts, basketry, weaving with looms, string bags, clay modelling." "I can remember saying to somebody 'Why do we do so much handwork in this school?' and the teacher said 'so if you didn't get a job after you left school you could make things and sell them.'"

The advent of World War II interrupted schooling as buildings were taken over by the military. Some students were moved to the country whilst others returned to their families who attempted to enrol them (not

always successfully; "they told my mother they couldn't guarantee to teach me") in local schools.

In Australia during the 1960's and 1970's the push for students with sensory impairments to be integrated into mainstream schools became widespread. Students had to contend with discrimination and ignorance as well as the practicalities of using and carrying noisy and heavy equipment around the labyrinths of high-school corridors, often without the benefit of orientation and mobility training, and sometimes without the support of an itinerant teacher. Usually it fell to the parents to fill in the gaps; "my mother used to read onto it [tape] then I'd copy things – I used to go home and write and write and write...to do an essay I'd have to initially braille my essay then I'd have to sit down and type it – so if I made a typing error I'd just have to cross it out with x's – if I forgot where I was on the page or what I typed I couldn't read it". "Boy, did I hate that typewriter! You never knew when the ribbon was going to go or get unthreaded or whether the stuff was really coming out on the paper or whether you were typing over something.."

Socially things could be difficult too. "I was with people who would talk about 'mods' and 'sharpies' and getting all dressed up to see the boys and I was still thinking about Dylan Thomas and loving England.. "I didn't know that all the other



*students had long hair!... the other girls had read different books than what I had read but I could play popsongs and that was my entrée into their life”.*

Despite these obstacles some people chose to study at university where there was also misunderstanding and discrimination. *“I decided not to do psychology but instead to do philosophy because the psychology professor said that blind students didn’t do psychology, they did philosophy”.*

All of my interviewees worked for a living and in addition many have also given their time to community organisations for which two have already been made Members of the Order of Australia for their contributions.

Collectively I could say that they have made their dreams come true by overcoming the obstacles that vision impairment put in their way regardless of the difficulties they experienced in accessing information during their student days. Today, information technology provides the means for some dreams to come true – but it is only a small part of a larger picture – our years at school are only the pathway to the fulfilling life that lies ahead of us all.

*“I always wanted to be a tapdancer. My parents used to say ‘well we’re not going to get lessons for you – people don’t want you tapping all over their floors’. I took it up when I was 28. I guess my dream came true.”*

# Diary of Events



## **Executive meeting Date for 2001**

Members are welcome to attend the Management Committee meeting to be held at the State Library cafeteria at 5:30pm on Tuesday 27 November 2001.

The next **seminar** will be held at the State Library this year on 10 November, 2001. Please note that the **Annual General Meeting** will be held on this day prior to the seminar.

## **Stop Press**

Peter Rubinstein presented his paper on the 100 centenarians project at the Conference and will expand this at the OHAA (NSW) Seminar on 10 November 2001 at the State Library of New South Wales. A flyer will be in the mail nearer the time. However, we urge you to save the date – Peter and his centenarians are fascinating. His topic will be enlarged to include 'Celebrating a Century of Memories' – from 1901 to last week!

## **Public History Interest Network**

Meets next on Saturday 17 November 2001 at the Fairfield City Museum & Gallery, Cnr Oxford Street & The Horsley Drive, Smithfield. 9:45am for 10:00am start.

Graham Hinton will be hosting this event and suggests that we begin at the Museum & Gallery for a tour and morning tea. Then we head off in a car convoy (alas no mini bus available) on a cultural tour of Fairfield providing an overview of the different cultures that have made Australia home over the last 200 years. Along the way we will pass clubs and religious buildings that represent the diversity of the area and the people who have settled there. The tour takes about one to two hours depending on how long we linger at each stop. We will finish up at Cabramatta for lunch.

If interested in joining the tour please book before 22 October –

Contact Margaret Park, 9936 8411 or email <parmar@northsydney.nsw.gov.au> or Roslyn Burge, 0413 733 218 or email <Roslyn.Burge@uts.edu.au>

**XIIth International Oral History  
Conference, South Africa, June 2002**

Theme: Memory, Healing and  
Development

Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal,  
South Africa June 24-27, 2002

IOHA 2002 Organizing Committee,  
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Africa . email:<ohp@nu.ac.za.>

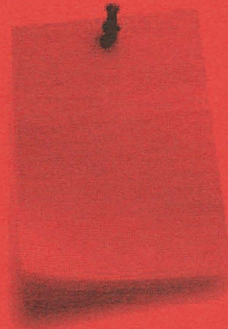
Oceania Inquiries to: Janis Wilson  
<jwilton@metz.une.edu.au>.

**Conference May 23-25, 2002 in Berlin**

The Institute for History and Biography  
at the Open University in Hagen, as  
the German representative of the Oral  
History Association, will hold a  
conference on the transformation  
process in Central and Eastern Europe.  
Further details from

Dr Alexander von Plato. Email  
<alexandervonplato@fernuni-hagen.de>

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